

COMMON GROUND



MARCH—APRIL, 1955

VOLUME IX NUMBER 2

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AFRICA: FROM THE MAPPE MONDE
painted by order of Henry II of France, 1546.

("Les Monuments de la Geographie," by M. Jonard)
(Reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum)

Cover Photograph: The Chief Rabbi, the Bishop of Johannesburg, the Haham, and
the Archbishop of Canterbury, at the Annual General Meeting of the Council of
Christians and Jews, 15th March, 1955.

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PUBLISHED BY THE COUNCIL OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS

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Signed articles express the views of the contributors which are not necessarily those of the Council of Christians and Jews.

Judaism and Problems of Race Relations

THE VERY REV. THE HAHAM

Dr. Solomon Gaon, the Chief Rabbi of the Spanish and Portuguese Congregations in Great Britain, addressed the Annual General Meeting of the Council of Christians and Jews on March 15th. The general theme of the meeting was "Religious Groups and Problems of Racial Tension." The second address, by the Bishop of Johannesburg, is printed later in this issue of "Common Ground."

BOTH Judaism and Christianity subscribe to the Biblical assertion that man was created in the image of God, and this is the basis for our belief in the unity of all mankind. But Judaism considers it as one of the reflections of divine creation that although all men descend from Adam yet all of them are not alike. It is only when we learn that all of us are partners in a great enterprise in the fulfilment of God's will, that we realise that every individual can make a contribution towards the welfare of humanity, a contribution which is unlike that made by any other person. And every race, owing to its biological inheritance as well as to historical experience, can contribute something to the welfare of humanity which cannot be obtained from any other group of people.

The Jewish Law maintains that if the Jew is asked to refute the existence and the special concept of God, then he must allow himself to suffer death rather than deny this fundamental principle of his faith. This does not merely refer to God in a theological sense but also to God

as he reveals himself in creation and human relations. "The Mosiac genius," wrote Ferdinand Gregorius, the famous German historian, "launched the highest metaphysical conception of man, namely that he is the son of God." From this has come the conception of human dignity and of the equality of all men. True, there are some laws in the Bible which are calculated to create a division between the children of Israel and those nations who lived around Palestine, but these laws were not intended to give the children of Israel a superiority complex! They were intended to make them aware of their duty to other peoples. They had, so to speak, to retire for a certain time in order to learn the true meaning of their Torah, their Law, in order to convey it to other nations and to other peoples. They had to learn how to be holy, how to become a nation of priests and a holy nation. This is also borne out by the meaning of the word "holy" in Hebrew, *Kadosh*, the original meaning of which is to "exclude," to "separate." And this is the meaning of the promise which the Almighty gave to Abraham, as we read in the Bible, that through him should all the families of the earth be blessed.

Men judged as individuals

Our Rabbis teach us that man must be judged by his qualities, by his character, and not by his ancestry, by his colour or even by his background. Ruth of Moab was able to marry Boaz because of the compassion that she had shown towards her mother-in-law, Naomi. And it was Ruth who founded the most popular and the most respected dynasty in ancient Israel, the Davidic dynasty, from which, according to Jewish tradition, the Messiah would come. Moses himself married a Midianite woman. And it was Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, who gave him the best advice concerning the judicial organisation of the people of Israel, advice that Moses was commanded by the Almighty to accept.

"Have we all not one father? Hath not one God created us?" asks the prophet Malachi. And our Rabbis elaborate this saying by a statement that all men are descended from the same man, from Adam, and in consequence, that there is no superiority of one family, of one group of nations over the other. There are no inherently righteous or wicked races or nations, but only wicked and righteous individuals. The differences which we can find among different groups of people has been explained by that great teacher in the Talmud, Hillel, who lived in the first century of the current era, when he said that all the physiological differences which we find in the world are due to geographical and cultural situations. Yet we must not ignore the importance of the races, of their inheritance, of their background and of their history. We can derive great wealth of

experience and knowledge from the variety that the human race exhibits. We can learn from each other, we can teach each other, we can live with each other in fellowship and love.

World outlook

Closer co-operation among all the groups of people can only be created if we are ready to make an effort to create a world outlook. Dr. Schweitzer, that great theologian and great humanitarian, says it is lack of such a world outlook, based on the fear of God and the love of God, that has caused so many conflicts and so many wars during the last centuries, and only by creating such an outlook shall we be able to create a new civilisation. Judaism never claimed to be entirely original, and the people of Israel were ready to borrow and to learn from different civilisations as well as from different cultures. They did not believe that thereby they were in any way impairing the strength and the originality of the divine message which they received at the foot of Mount Sinai. They believed that in this way they were creating a unity which was essential for the brotherhood of man. And, in this way, the Jew was able to look with common sense upon the differences that existed among different races. The Jew never looked upon them as a source of inferiority or superiority but merely as a wonder of divine creation. This is well expressed by a rabbinic story in which we are told that the Almighty divided the world among the sons of Noah. He blessed Shem and his sons to be black and handsome and gave them all the inhabited earth. He blessed Ham to be black like a raven and gave him and his sons all the shores of the seas of the world. Finally, he blessed Japhet to be white and beautiful and gave him all the pastures of the world. And in that very same story we are told that the Jews are not as black as the sons of Ham and not as white as the sons of Japhet. And indeed there were many teachers in the Talmud who were of coloured skin.

The Torah is man's common heritage

The children of Israel were not to consider themselves to be superior to other races because the Law was revealed to Israel. On the contrary, a duty was laid on them to convey to all the nations of the world the truth of the divine law which was revealed to them through Moses. To quote another Rabbinic story, we are told that the Almighty first of all offered the Law, the Torah, to all the nations of the world, but they refused to accept it because they felt that it imposed too many limitations upon their lives. Only after all the other nations had refused, were the children of Israel asked to receive the Torah. But it is significant, say our Rabbis, that

the Torah was not given to the children of Israel in the Promised Land, but in the desert, a place to which no nation could lay claim. This, said the Rabbis, was because the Almighty wanted to show that although given to the children of Israel, the Torah is the common heritage of all mankind.

And it is through the Torah, through the Law, through religion, through faith, that all groups of people and all races can be brought nearer to each other. Our faith teaches us that we are here to do the will of God, to understand each other, and to improve the world that God has created. Our faith tells us that God loves all his children and that we have to imitate him by trying to foster love and understanding among our fellow men. It is this faith, says Judaism, that makes man co-partner with God in the development of humanity towards righteousness and justice. It is a faith which does not merely remain in the heart of man, but is carried into our everyday life. Judaism teaches us that this fellowship of the spirit transcends all the differences that exist among different races. It is the human fellowship of which it is said in the third chapter of Deuteronomy, that when we do the will of God then we are all called the sons of God.

Moral causes of racial antagonisms

The great Jewish philosopher, Philo of Alexandria, said that the relationship of the spirit is greater and stronger than the relationship of the blood. It is for that reason that we believe that the racial antagonisms which exist today in the world have underlying moral causes. When we realise that, we shall understand that the duty of fostering understanding among the different races of the world becomes a religious duty. Judaism tells us that every man is dear to God and we have to value the life of every individual. According to Jewish tradition it was during the last day of Passover that the Egyptian armies were drowned in the Red Sea. It is for that reason, say our sages, that the Jews were commanded that they must not recite the full hymn of praise that day, for the Almighty is represented as mourning for his children, for his Egyptian children, and as saying to the children of Israel: "How can you sing praises to me while I am mourning for the death of my children?"

The Rabbis tell us that if anyone destroys a soul, then he destroys the world itself, for every individual is a world in himself. Every individual can claim that the world was created because of him, and we must therefore always regard people as individuals, although we are often inclined to look on them only as members of different races and different nations.

Only when we have learnt to see men in their relationship to God, as creatures of God and as our brothers, shall we be able to build a



THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY AND THE CHIEF RABBI WITH
OVERSEA VISITORS AT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS

Left to right: M. Maurice Vanikoff (France), the Chief Rabbi, Herr Henry-Herbert Lyon (Saar), the Haham, the Bishop of Johannesburg, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Herr Kunz von Kauffungen (Saar), Herr Max L. Cahn (Germany), Professor Dr. Hendrick van Oyen (Switzerland).

world in accordance with the visions of our ancient prophets. As the Jewish scholar Dr. Epstein says, in *The Faith of Judaism*, if society is to get rid of its diseases there must be an inner cleansing of the individuals who make up society, and whose vices and failures constitute the vices and failures of the society to which they belong. This regeneration of the heart can come only through the power of God working on the spirit of men. And it is in keeping with this idea that the Jewish sages emphasise that the commandment "Love thy neighbour as thyself," given in the book of Leviticus, was given in the singular, and not in the plural as most of the commandments of the Old Testament, in order to indicate that this law in the first place applied to the relationship between man and man.

Judaism leaves no doubt that the theory of an ineradicable biological inferiority of one race is out of harmony with the ethical traditions of Biblical and Rabbinic doctrine. Neither the historic Jewish nor the

historic Christian faith admits of any racial interpretation of scriptural doctrine. Neither the Rabbis nor the Apostles nor the Church Fathers considered race as an index of character or mind. Belief in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man are as essential to Christianity as they are to Judaism (Rabbi Dr. S. Rappaport, *Rabbinic Thoughts on Race*). And perhaps I can best summarise the attitude of Judaism towards inter-racial antagonisms if I quote again from that great philosopher Philo when he said, in speaking of the scope of Mosaic law, "What our most holy prophet especially desires to create is unanimity, neighbourliness, fellowship, reciprocity of feeling, whereby houses and cities and nations and countries, and the whole human race may advance to supreme happiness."

Race Relations in South Africa

THE RT. REV. THE LORD BISHOP OF JOHANNESBURG

The Bishop of Johannesburg, the Rt. Rev. Ambrose Reeves, addressed the Annual General Meeting of the Council of Christians and Jews on March 15th. This article is based on his talk.

IN many parts of the world today racial tensions are assuming very serious dimensions. In some places this is little more than a subjective state of mind which is described usually as colour prejudice, but in other places such as South Africa, this prejudice is objectified in the determination to maintain and encourage certain status relationships between individuals and groups. In South Africa indeed racial tensions are to be seen in as acute a form as anywhere in the contemporary world. It is true that some of the social and educational services for Africans in the Union of South Africa are relatively better than those provided elsewhere in the continent of Africa for the non-Europeans. It is also true that there is not the same naked struggle for power in South Africa as we find at the present time for instance in Kenya, but it is in South Africa that those in authority have made it quite plain that the only way in which racial tensions can be eased between various ethnic groups is by creating social autonomy.

Three main reasons are given for this policy of compulsory segregation. It is urged that in the first place the ethnic groups in the country are at such different cultural developments that they cannot be treated alike; secondly, that western civilisation must be maintained for the sake of the white population, and thirdly that whenever people of the various racial groups are brought into close contact, tension and conflict are inevitable. So a continuous spate of legislation aimed at securing a

biological, territorial, social, educational, economic and political segregation, pours from the South African parliament.

Flight from reality

In theory all this may not appear to be very offensive morally. Indeed, I am myself convinced that those in the Dutch Reformed Churches who have advocated complete and utter segregation have been impelled to do so because they are seriously alarmed at the continued exploitation of the black by the white. But nobody can live for long in South Africa without realising that such complete segregation as is envisaged would involve a complete reshaping of the whole pattern of South African society, and that is a step which would be seriously resisted by white as much as by black. While I have a deep respect for the Dutch Reformed Churches I believe that their desire for entire and utter segregation constitutes a most serious flight from reality. It is a piece of escapism on a grand scale. Indeed our late Prime Minister, Dr. Malan, entirely rejected this particular idea. Nevertheless a sustained attempt is being made in South Africa to introduce some form of separation and segregation, which has little relation to this theoretical and idealised segregation advocated by some of our religious leaders.

While, of course, six years is far too short a time to discern what the pattern of a segregated society is likely to be when completed, it is already clear that its chief effect is to secure continued domination of the white minority in our country. In other words, what no doubt is intended by some exponents of compulsory segregation as merely the separation between our various ethnic groups, becomes in practice a form of discrimination against all non-Europeans. The non-European members of our society are left therefore to conclude that they are being oppressed under this present order and that their position is far worse today than it was six years ago.

Absentees from contemporary history

Yet South Africa is only one example of one of the gravest problems which is now confronting religious people all over the world, a problem which I believe Jew and Christian alike can evade only by becoming absentees from contemporary history. And that I am persuaded is what a great many religious people in fact are unfortunately doing at the present time. I am, of course, far from suggesting that religious people should merely echo the views of those secular sentimentalists who are as unrealistic in their approach to racial tension as I believe the advocates of compulsory segregation to be. Ours is a far harder task. We who name the name of God must recognise that if racial tensions are not to be

resolved either by recourse to violence or by the permanent separation of ethnic groups from one another, it is incumbent upon religious people to find some other way. This I believe will be possible only as we take the pains to examine again what exactly the Bible has to say to us about racial tension. I am convinced that only in so far as our views on racial tension rest upon a religious foundation shall we have the strength and the courage to resist those who with all the means at their disposal seek to play upon our own prejudices and fears to divide us from our brethren.

A chosen people?

If we examine the views of many of the most convinced advocates of compulsory segregation, we find that they regard the white race in general and themselves in particular as the members of a chosen people raised up by God to preserve either western culture or the values of white civilisation, and it has often seemed to me that this is the very point at which our Jewish friends ought to be making a far greater contribution to our understanding of these problems than they have yet done. I say this because the advocates of racial segregation frequently base their argument about being a chosen nation or race directly on the Old Testament concept of a chosen people. There is also, I admit, a doctrine of a chosen people in the New Testament, but it is because so many racialists believe that God has raised them up very much as the Hebrews of old were raised up to fulfil a peculiar and unique destiny that I believe Hebrew scholars have a particular contribution to make, both by describing exactly what this concept of the chosen nation meant to the Israel of old and by pointing out the ways in which modern racialists who base their theory of a chosen nation on the Old Testament, have departed radically from all the richness of thought which clusters around the idea of the people of God in the scriptures.

But those of us who call ourselves Christian, and who therefore regard ourselves as members of a chosen community, must also direct our attention to this same question. To look forward to a new Jerusalem, in which those gathered out of every nation and tribe and race will walk together in a city which is at unity in itself, does not mean ranging ourselves alongside those secular cosmopolitans who delight in decrying their own national heritage. It means rather that we must learn to love our country in the right way and to be proud of it for the right reasons. The tragedy is that in racial matters Christians are so often motivated by elements entirely contrary to this. This is perhaps understandable in the sense that most Christians at least in the west are members of that white race which for so long has been dominant in the world. The fact remains,

however, that such an attitude of superiority is an offence against God, and I am convinced that the maintenance of a colour bar or the attempt of one ethnic group to dominate those of another ethnic group on the ground of colour difference is contrary to both the teaching and the spirit of holy scripture. There in the Bible is writ large that we must learn to live together, men with women, young with old, rich with poor, learned with ignorant, yes, and those with white skins with their brethren who have black or brown or yellow faces. Anything which disturbs the harmony of this unity in diversity is sin.

Equality and inequalities

This does not mean, of course, that all races are identical or that all races are at the same stage of cultural development. Indeed it is all too obvious that the reverse is the case. Yet the Bible insists that all men are equally the object of the love of God, that all men are made in the divine image, and as a Christian I must add that Jesus Christ shed his blood on the Cross for all men irrespective of the colour of their skin. Because of this, and only because of this, all men whatever may be their colour, their culture and their character, are of equal value in the sight of God and therefore are of equal value to one another. Equality of value does not, of course, imply an identity of function in the human community, but it denies completely the validity of assigning men a particular status in human society simply by reason of the colour of their skin. Certainly this irrational preoccupation with race has become so virulent in South Africa today that it determines not only all social, economic and political policies, but also all our human relationships.

Not that I have any desire to underestimate the value of what has been done in recent years by the present Government in South Africa for the material welfare of the non-European. The good that is done, however, is completely overshadowed by the discrimination against the black and the artificial elevation of the white. It is important, therefore, that those who take their stand on the scriptures should make it plain that any policy of discrimination against any ethnic group anywhere is an affront to the religious conscience simply because we assert that all men everywhere are human beings, and as such no effort must be spared to develop their mind and their characters in every way possible. The important thing from the Christian point of view is that our differences are not obliterated in Jesus Christ but that they are transcended.

While I am persuaded, however, that the first responsibility of religious groups in relation to problems of racial tension is a theological one, and that our primary task is to rediscover from the Bible the principles which



YOUNG GIRL OF AFRICA
An example of modern Bantu wood carving.

(Photo by courtesy of the S.P.i.)

ought to determine our actions and attitudes in this respect, it by no means follows that we have the right to claim some peculiar insight into the problem of the methods by which those principles are to be applied. Indeed, it may well be that we shall differ among ourselves as to the line of action most appropriate to some particular situation. Nor need this surprise us unduly.

Principle into practice

But although our primary responsibility is with the study of underlying principles it is most important to recognise that study in itself is not enough. For the principles themselves only become really intelligible as we try to embody them into the structure of society. We owe it to mankind, therefore, to make that effort, always providing that we claim no divine sanction for this or that particular solution.

It is in precisely this spirit that some of the leaders both of the Jewish and Christian communities in South Africa have tried during the past few years to grapple with some of the critical racial issues in that country. To me personally it is a matter of real grief that the former South African Society of Jews and Christians has long since ceased to function, but although at present we have no organisation, in Johannesburg at least we have close personal contact between some of the Jewish and Christian leaders, and in many cases a common mind on the questions that confront us. For that I personally am most grateful and I hope it will continue.

Important as it is, however, for Christians and Jews to hold firmly to the teaching of the Bible on race and to seek ways in which the Biblical principles can be translated into practical life, it is still more important that they should renew their dedication to God in worship. Only in a God-centred fellowship can we really pursue the work of reconciliation of man to man, for only there shall we find the power which can redeem us from our prejudices and fears, our wilfulness and our waywardness.

I know from personal experience how difficult this can be in a multi-racial society in which almost everything that synagogue or church attempts to do is contrary to the secular climate in which the people of God have to live and work. Yet because the Bible teaches us that all races are equal in God's sight and that none must be hindered from developing its capacities to the full, I know that however difficult the task, it is never impossible. In South Africa the situation in which we have to live is very tangled and very confused. Yet, looking into that situation as deeply as I can, I would still dare to apply to it that ancient prophecy which puts into the mouth of the Lord of Hosts these words: "Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance."

Religious Minorities in Schools

A. I. POLACK

A previous article dealing with Religious Minorities at Independent Boarding Schools was printed in the September—October, 1954, issue of "Common Ground."

(2) The Day School

AT a meeting recently held in London to hear a talk on Jewish religious education, a member of the audience said that he was strongly opposed to the Jewish boys "slinking out of School Assembly as soon as prayers started." As it happened there were several youths present, and one of them, a large boy of about sixteen who looked rather like a Rugby football forward, got up from his seat and said with considerable indignation, "Mr. Chairman, I object to the phrase 'slink out.' We don't do anything of the sort. We make a graceful exit!"

This story is allegorical. It illustrates two opposite attitudes that may be taken up both by and towards the minority religious groups attending the ordinary day schools of the country. But, in order to get the position clear, it must be seen against the general background of religious training as an element in our educational system.

The story may for practical purposes start with the 1944 Education Act. By its provision the school day was to commence with an act of worship, and religious instruction was to be included as an essential part of the curriculum. It is specifically stated that this is to be non-doctrinal in character and in accordance with an agreed syllabus. It thus embodies the principle laid down in the famous Cowper-Temple clause. What is not always appreciated, however, is that "non-doctrinal" in this context means Christian in the broadest sense, that is to say not tied to the special teaching of any one Christian denomination.

In such a situation, provision has to be made for non-conforming minorities—Roman Catholics, Christian Scientists and one or two other Christian Groups must here be included, as well as the adherents of other religions such as Judaism and Islam—and the Act, in accordance with a long standing tradition of religious toleration in this country, contains a generously worded conscience clause. Any pupil may be withdrawn from the act of worship and the scripture periods on religious grounds. Arrangements too can be made for special services and instruction to be given to such pupils by the denominations concerned, and (in the case of secondary schools) these may take place on the school premises. This means that parents can, according to the law of the land, ensure that their children, when entrusted to the school, are not subjected to the teaching of any unacceptable doctrines.

Here, we may think, the whole matter is happily concluded and that there is nothing more to say. Unfortunately in such conditions there is always the human factor to consider. People are not made good (or tolerant, or wise) by Act of Parliament and no law can ensure that its intentions and general spirit are always carried out in practice.

In this particular case, evidence shows that the intention of the law may be inhibited in three special ways. First, a head teacher in his natural desire to have the whole school present for the act of worship (which takes place at the morning Assembly) may put pressure on parents of a non-conforming group to let their children attend. At one or two schools a special service, broadly Christian in character, has been devised for this purpose. Secondly, parents themselves (who are sometimes ignorant of the law) tend on occasion to take the line of least resistance, partly through indifference, partly lest they should make their children appear in any way conspicuous. Thirdly, there is the natural instinct in most children to want to toe the line and behave like everybody else. The element of fear plays a considerable part in such an attitude.

Practical difficulties

There are also what may be called technical or administrative difficulties in the matter of withdrawal and the provision of special religious training. Children have to be specially supervised when they are taken away from the organised school life. They do not, if they are healthy, remain quiet when left to themselves ! It is not always easy for a denomination to make arrangements for a suitable religious instructor to visit a particular school and, especially in the case of a widely scattered community (such as the Jewish), it is hardly possible to see that small isolated groups of children receive adequate religious training during school hours.

Yet the total picture is far from gloomy and shows that in the main the provisions of the act are working well. According to the recent report by the Research Committee of the Institute of Christian Education " Roman Catholics and Jews usually exercise their right of withdrawal . . . Jews often attend Old Testament Lessons and sometimes New Testament as well Christian Scientists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists often, though not invariably, absent themselves Roman Catholics, Christian Scientists and other religious bodies usually provide instruction in or out of school hours; Jews frequently do, more often out of school than in The majority of Heads apparently do not feel responsible for arranging such instruction in school time, but no objection appears to be made when priests and rabbis visit the school."

So much for the status of religious minority groups at what may be called the official level. But something must be said in conclusion about their social position in the school and their relations with the majority of their fellow-pupils.

Here it is a question of imponderables and the evidence is bound to be uncertain and difficult to collect. There are sometimes complaints of prejudice on the part of teachers, of attempts at discrimination when it comes to admission (particularly at the Independent Grammar Schools), of a hostile attitude on the part of the majority group. Sometimes the minority lays itself open to criticism. One Headmistress complained that the Jewish girls in her school got on excellently with the rest until one or two of them tried to force the whole group into anti-social ways. The Headmaster of a Grammar School, on the other hand, expressed anxiety about the "submissiveness" of his Jewish pupils, due to the rebuffs which they had so often received in the past. Jewish parents, on their side, frequently complain that their children are given "a bad time" by their fellows on the ground that "the wicked Jews were responsible for the Crucifixion."

Perhaps the best solution to the whole of this problem was given by the boy who said that he made a "graceful exit." For toleration is ultimately a question of human dignity. When head teachers and their staffs recognise, as they generally do, the right of minorities to be "different" and respect them for their independence, there is not likely to be a religious or social problem in the school. But an obligation falls on the minority group as well, particularly the parents. If they bring up their children to be ashamed of their "differences" and to run away from the duties that it involves, they are doing the school a disservice, putting a premium on insincerity, and stultifying the spirit of the 1944 Act. There is in existence a certain Jewish Voluntary Aided School which always contains a small number of Christian children. Annually a prize is offered to them for knowledge of their own religion. This is the principle of religious toleration working at its best and it typifies all that is most enlightened in the English educational tradition.

TOLERANCE—CAN IT BE TAUGHT ? By A. I. POLACK
With a foreword by ROBERT BIRLEY, Headmaster of Eton College

Revised Edition

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"The Church and the Jewish People"

LEON ZEITLIN

Dr. Leon Zeitlin comments on the Symposium "The Church and the Jewish People," edited by Göte Hedenquist and published by the Edinburgh House Press (Price 10s. 6d.).

DR. JAMES PARKES, in his recently published Gilkey Lecture, again draws attention to what he believes to be the fundamental difference between Christianity, as a religion offering salvation to the individual, and Judaism as offering a way of life for men in community. This distinction has a clear bearing on many of the issues raised by a collection of essays on *The Church and the Jewish People* published a few months ago by the Edinburgh House Press and edited by Göte Hedenquist. "To the Christian who takes his religion seriously," writes Bishop Stephen Neill in an introductory essay to this Symposium, "the survival of the Jewish people is a mystery, a challenge and a problem." Although this statement may seem at first sight to have little direct relation to Dr. Parkes' thesis, it certainly raises the question as to which of the numerous theological problems arising out of the perennial existence of the Jewish people has the prior claim to consideration.

Starting from the assumption that religion lays down the primary patterns of human existence, and that, therefore, on the last analysis, it determines the general form of social life, there is good ground for endorsing, from the Jewish point of view, Bishop Neill's interpretation of the survival of the Jews as a community in religious terms. Indeed, I should myself maintain, though not without the risk of serious opposition, that the Jews have survived through centuries of persecution and oppression not as a race but as a religious group. If, however, we accept Bishop Neill's explanation, it is reasonable to assume that we have also to accept the inference that every argument for the truth of the Christian faith is equally applicable as an argument for the truth of Judaism. In this sense the future of Christian-Jewish relationships on the highest spiritual level will ultimately depend on the genuineness of the answers Christians give to certain questions posed to them from the Jewish point of view by Rabbi Leo Baeck, whose contribution is perhaps the most significant of all the essays in this volume.

"Judaism within the Church"

These "particular Jewish questions" originate from the fact that "by virtue of the Bible and of the Jewish heritage as a whole" there are, as Rabbi Baeck points out, "forceful Jewish elements within the Church;" that there is, in fact, "a history of Judaism within the Church." "Will the Church," he asks, "become more cognizant of this phenomenon, since up

till now only insufficient attention is being paid to this part of the Jewish drama in the world?" And will the Church become more aware both of these "essential elements of its own life and of the unique significance of the survival of the Jewish religion?"

The spirit of the Symposium as a whole suggests the existence of a sincere desire on the part of many in the Churches to answer these questions in the affirmative. On the other hand, there are questions the Christian has a right to put to the Jew and to which he is entitled to expect an equally frank answer. These questions are raised by implication rather than explicitly. This may be due to the fact that at its first Assembly at Amsterdam in 1948 the World Council of Churches laid its primary emphasis on the need for more careful study by Christians themselves of the many complex problems which exist in this particular field of human and religious relations. This present volume is, in fact, a direct consequence of the concern expressed at the Amsterdam Assembly.



Problem for the Church

Professor Rengstorff, Professor of Theology in the University of Münster, in an essay on *The Jewish Problem and the Church's Understanding of its own Mission*, maintains that Christians must learn to see this problem as in the first instance a problem for the Church itself, the solution of which is to be found in the Cross and in that alone. This, however, would in no way justify the Christian in by-passing some of the crucial questions which sooner or later must be addressed to Jews; questions relating to problems which have caused, and still cause, endless heart-searchings. Although it is increasingly realised that the initiatives of understanding must come from the Christian side, because "the guilt of Christendom is so heavy that it can hardly be exaggerated," it is argued that, if better relations are to prevail between Jews and Christians, "Jews also are called to repentance and to a sense of responsibility," because "in any matter of human controversy, guilt is rarely if ever wholly concentrated on one side." This is quite true, and I should be the last to claim for Jews "total innocence in the field of Jewish-Gentile relationships." But whatever the shortcomings and deficiencies of Jews may be, and there are plenty of them, it will be difficult to deny that misinterpretation and persecution came from the Christian side. This may explain, though it does not justify, a Jewish tendency to condemn as a renegade every Jew who has ever become a Christian.

At the same time there is more than a hint of condescension in a suggestion that Jews must be allowed the "right to bear witness to their faith and to try to win others for it," in spite of the fact that they "have

been content rather to guard the law for themselves than to think of it as a universal law going forth from Zion to be a blessing and a guide to the Gentiles too." In this connection I should entirely endorse Dr. Parkes' insistence that "there is no subject on which a Christian should speak with more restraint and delicacy (than the missionary enterprise in Judaism)." For, as he goes on to point out, "the first law of the Roman Empire in which we can trace the influence of the Christian Church is a law of Constantine which attached the death penalty to conversion to Judaism, and a like penalty to the Jew who did the converting."

Writing as a Jewish layman for whom Judaism has the meaning of a faith for living, I find myself much in harmony with the sense of reality so lucidly manifest in an essay by Gösta Lindeskog of the University of Upsalla on *Judaism Today*. Judaism, it is true, is very sensitive to world events, and global in its perspective. But can we imagine that in evaluating the impact of current history on a suffering mankind there should be, even for a moment, the slightest difference of opinion between Christian and Jewish spiritual leaders, irrespective of "the special concern that the Church has for the Jewish people" as their approach to the burning issues at stake! It is because Christianity and Judaism are both universal and missionary that the promotion of peace, tolerance and social justice must be their common aim and end in our time.

Possibilities of co-operation

Thus by a somewhat circuitous route we come to a vantage point from which to venture a final appreciation of this remarkable Symposium. For the volume seems to me to be in itself a landmark on the road to Jewish-Christian co-operation, the possibilities and limitations of which it clearly indicates. A well-balanced survey of such areas of co-operation, written by W. W. Simpson, suggests that the possibilities by far exceed the limitations, though the extent and the seriousness of those limitations must never be underestimated or minimised. "Co-operation," writes Mr. Simpson, "is not an end in itself. Neither are such ideals as those of tolerance, mutual respect, goodwill or even brotherhood, the ultimate goals of human existence. At least they cannot be so regarded by either Christians or Jews for whom the end of all living is to know God and to enjoy Him for ever." There is much to be learned on both sides; there are many searching questions to be put and answered by Christian and Jew alike. This Symposium is very far from saying the last word about either the questions or the answers, but there is good reason for hoping that it will do much to stimulate thought about both.

Roman Catholics and the Council

THE news of the withdrawal of Roman Catholics from membership originally reached the Executive Committee two or three weeks before the date fixed for the Annual General Meeting on December 9th last. In view of the seriousness of this news and of the hopes that were entertained that some way might be found of surmounting the difficulties to which it gave rise it was decided to postpone the meeting for a period of about three months. Alternative arrangements were therefore made for the meeting to be held on March 15th. In the meantime it was agreed, as was reported in the last issue of *Common Ground*, that no statement on the matter should be made by either side pending certain discussions which it was hoped might take place.

Although certain progress had been made, no final decision had been reached as to the possibility of a resumption of Roman Catholic participation in the Council's work by the date fixed for the postponed meeting. By this time, however, it was evident from the interest aroused by an earlier leakage, through an unauthorised channel, concerning the resignations that some statement must be made, and some action taken by the Annual General Meeting. Resignations had been officially submitted. They could not be unofficially ignored.

It fell to the lot of the Archbishop of Canterbury, therefore, as Chairman of the meeting, both to make a statement concerning what had taken place and also to suggest a procedure for dealing with the situation created by the resignations. In a statement issued to the Press at the commencement of the meeting the Archbishop confirmed that the resignations had in fact taken place. "The situation," he said, "can be easily explained. From the Roman Catholic side," he continued, "there was no failure to appreciate and approve the aims and objects to promote which the Council exists, but the Vatican was not satisfied with some of the ways and means adopted by the Council in pursuit of those aims."

That the fact of the resignations became known, he said, was "against the wishes of the Council and of the Roman Catholic authorities of this country." He added that "it was stated in a Roman Catholic paper that dissatisfaction was felt on the Roman Catholic side because it was supposed that the operations of the Council involved the danger of 'indifferentism.' I understand," added His Grace, "that by 'indifferentism' is meant a belief that one religion is as good as another, a belief which—if you think it out—is rejected by the very existence of this Council."

"The Council of Christians and Jews," the statement continued, "was happy to recognise that on the Roman Catholic side there was no

differing about the aims and objects of the Council and that criticism was confined to some of its methods. The Council was completely sure in its own mind that it had not done anything to encourage indifferentism in the sense described, and that it had no desire to do anything of the sort; and it was therefore satisfied that there must be misunderstanding somewhere.

"All I need add is that discussions are still going on with the Roman Catholic authorities to remove their misunderstanding and to take any reasonable steps to avoid any recurrence of it. These discussions are still in progress: when they are concluded it will be possible to make a further statement."

And in the meantime—what? It was in answer to this question that the Archbishop himself suggested that instead of merely accepting the resignations with regret or even allowing them to lie on the table, the meeting should adopt the somewhat unusual procedure of re-electing *in absentia* the Roman Catholic officers and members of the Council "on the understanding," as the Archbishop put it, "that their election will take effect only if in the course of this year they have resumed their membership."

Commentary

● Peace through fear

The proposition that "perfect love casteth out fear" is one to which most of us in our hearts would unhesitatingly assent. The fact that both in our individual and corporate relations we are very far from being in a state of "perfect love" is one we are bound, however regrettably, to accept. It would seem, therefore, to follow that the further we are from such a state of grace the greater the need for the employment of the sanction of fear if the worst consequences of our mutual suspicions and hatreds are to be avoided. Thus the knowledge that the secret of the hydrogen bomb is shared on both sides of the Iron Curtain may well serve, at any rate for the time being, as a deterrent against its exploitation by either side. We may not be very positive about loving our neighbours as ourselves, but at least there is a certain amount of empirical common sense in the warning against doing to others what we should not like them to do to us.

This view was recently endorsed both by His Grace the Archbishop of York in a moving speech in the House of Lords, and by His Eminence

the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster in a sermon preached in his Cathedral on the third Sunday of Lent. Both went on, however, to emphasise the fact that, as Dr. Garbett put it, "fear by itself is a frail and temporary deterrent." If there is any justification for making hydrogen bombs, he continued, it is that they should provide a shield beneath which the work for peace-making must be continued. In the same sense, Cardinal Griffin reminded his congregation that "the choice between war and peace does not rest with the winner of the arms race" and that "we must be positive in our endeavours for peace."

The fact that in this respect the burden of immediate responsibility rests upon statesmen of the world in no way, however, absolves those of us who at much less spectacular levels are concerned with the task of education for tolerance and sound human relations. The short term sanction of fear is justified only in so far as it enables us to go quietly and confidently forward with the long range task of education.

But neither the sanction of fear nor the progress of education is in itself sufficient to ensure a lasting peace, and what was clearly implied in everything that was said by the Archbishop of York was made explicit by the Cardinal in his conclusion that the only real alternative to peace through fear is peace through prayer. And in this respect both Jews and Christians stand together, for both are united in their insistence on the importance of prayer especially when it is conceived, not as the mere repetition of some form of words, but as the dedication of the whole life to the love and service of God.

● "Children of the World Unite!"

It was in the year 1922 that a Welsh Minister, the Rev. Gwilym Davies, first conceived the idea that the children of his native country might broadcast a message of peace and goodwill to the children of the world. Every year since that date, such a message has in fact been broadcast, and it is not without a certain paradoxical appropriateness that we in *Common Ground* first heard of this some few years ago through the "Goodwill Council" in South Africa, which in pursuance of this same ideal issues every year a series of lesson notes on "Brotherhood and Goodwill" for use by teachers in South African Schools.

The text of this year's message, to be broadcast on May 18th in English, Welsh, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Esperanto and Latin, has just reached us. With it came the news that its author, the Rev. Gwilym Davies, died on January 26th last, but not before he had completed the arrangements for the broadcasting of this message this year, and for the continuance of this now annual institution in future.

In tribute to the memory of a very great man and because of its own interest value we print below the text of a message which calls for no further comment on our part:

"Boys and Girls of all Nations! We, the boys and girls of Wales, once again greet you. This is goodwill day. Across land and sea, youth calls to youth in the name of freedom and of friendship.

"We rejoice, today, in all the efforts of men and women of every race and people, who are doing their best to set the world free from war.

"We want a world in which never again shall countless homes be destroyed and little children suffer hunger.

"We want a world where no nation shall live in fear of any other nation.

"We want a world where the nations shall work together for the good of all, trusting each other and sharing together the riches of the earth.

"By our confidence and courage, by our thoughts and deeds, we can help to spread a new spirit throughout the world. And we will!

"Youth of all lands, let us dedicate ourselves today to our great adventure of peace on earth and goodwill among men."

About Ourselves

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Council's postponed Annual General Meeting was held at Church House, Westminster on March 15th. The two major speeches at the meeting, by the Rt. Rev. the Lord Bishop of Johannesburg and the Very Rev. the Haham, Dr. Solomon Gaon, are printed elsewhere in this issue of *Common Ground*. The question of the Roman Catholic resignations from the Council was dealt with by His Grace the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, who presided over the meeting, and this too forms the subject of another article in our magazine.

The report of the Executive Committee on the Council's work was presented by Dr. C. E. Raven. Canon Raven stressed the increasing interest taken in the Council's work. This interest was reflected in the meetings organised under the Council's auspices, and in the much larger number of meetings arranged by other societies of our several communions to which the Council sent speakers. There was great support from Local Councils, especially in Cardiff, Manchester, Leeds and Liverpool, and, in the London area, Hampstead, Ilford and Willesden. In London also,

the London Society of Jews and Christians had arranged a useful series of lectures with distinguished Christian and Jewish speakers.

The Council also gave increasing attention to community problems, ranging from local issues to larger matters of international concern affecting the relations between Jews and Christians.

The Council's magazine *Common Ground* attracted increasing attention from other writers and journals.

The educational work of the Council was most important. There was a constant succession of meetings in schools, universities and educational centres. The Council had published a very important survey concerned with the teaching of history, called *History Without Bias?* which had been well received in the Press. This survey was being followed by a similar investigation into textbooks for religious instruction.

The most outstanding event in the past year had been the inauguration of the first Robert Waley Cohen Memorial Lecture. The Council owed an incalculable debt to the great man whose name was perpetuated in the lectureship, and it was an honour that Sir Richard Livingstone, Vice-President of the Council, delivered the inaugural lecture, and that Lord Samuel presided. The title of Sir Richard's address was "Tolerance in Theory and in Practice."

Toleration, which was central to the whole work of the Council, was immensely difficult. It was difficult for those who felt passionately on a controversial issue not to feel a certain strain in their relationships with those who disagreed with them. When the tension became less personal, as it did between coloured and national and social groupings, difficulties amounting almost to breaking point were constantly threatened. The Council's basic position in this regard was wisely and fully expressed in a letter written by Archbishop William Temple to the Chief Rabbi Hertz, the final paragraph of which is incorporated in the Council's constitution. The letter read:

"I would add that my own approach to this matter is governed by the consideration that the effectiveness of any religious belief depends upon its definiteness, and that neither Jews nor Christians should in my judgment combine in any such way as to obscure the distinctiveness of their witness to their own beliefs. There is much that we can do together in combating religious and racial intolerance, in forwarding social progress and in bearing witness to those moral principles which we unite in upholding."

That is embodied in the Council's constitution. Dr. Temple went on:

"Because of our co-operation and the mutual respect on which it rests, each party should no doubt try outside the Council to check

among their own friends anything that tends to breed contempt or hostility towards the other. But I am persuaded that we should do harm and not good if we were to pretend that the difference between us in the matter of religious faith is small or to obscure that difference for the sake of any religious fellowship which appeared to ignore our basic difference. To my mind, the value of our fellowship depends upon a clear recognition of this difference and upon our ability to co-operate while fully recognising it in a spirit of complete mutual respect for one another's convictions and consciences."

Canon Raven ended his report by emphasising the increasing value and influence of the Council. He regarded the Council of Christians and Jews in this country as of primary and unique importance. In it, Christians and Jews were united together not only in combating the evils of anti-semitism and racial intolerance. They were united together in order to advocate, along the lines of Dr. Temple's letter, a new relationship and a new attitude between those whose religious differences have in the past been bitterly acute. In these days the whole thinking world should be exploring the possibility of what we now called co-existence, and Canon Raven believed that the experience which this Council had gained in its crowded years of busy life, was a real possession in trust for far wider circles of humanity than we yet appreciated.

Treasurer's Report

Mr. Edmund de Rothschild, in presenting the accounts, appealed for special gifts or promises to help meet a probable deficit of £1,500 in the current year. As with so many other voluntary organisations, he said, the Council increasingly looked to commercial and industrial firms for support, as well as to individual subscribers. It was particularly helpful when support was made by way of seven-year covenants, which gave the Council both stability of income and the immense benefit of income tax refunds.

A vote of thanks to the Haham and to the Bishop of Johannesburg was proposed by the Chief Rabbi, who also thanked the Archbishop of Canterbury, both for presiding over the meeting with such characteristic skill and humour, and for all the leadership which he gave in the work of the Council.

An outstanding feature of this year's Annual General Meeting was the presence for the first time of representatives from Continental Councils of Christians and Jews. There were present M. Maurice Vanikoff from France, Herr Max L. Cahn from Germany, Herr Henry-Herbert Lyon

and Herr Kunz von Kauffungen from the Saarland, and Professor Dr. Hendrik van Oyen from Switzerland. These visitors were welcomed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and their visit was made the occasion for a consultation and exchange of views with members of the Council's Executive Committee.

The meeting itself was very well attended. There were present over 250 people widely representative of all sections of the community. Unfortunately two of the Council's Joint Presidents, the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and the Moderator of the Free Church Federal Council, were unable to be present at the meeting but the latter was represented by the Rev. Dr. A. Drummond Harcus, a former Moderator, and the Moderator-Elect, the Rev. F. P. Copland Simmons, was also present.

Book Notes

Not in our Stars

By Phyllis Bottome

(Faber & Faber, 12s. 6d.)

From its attractively designed dust-cover to its last inspiring word this is as clean, wholesome, healthy and stimulating a book as we have read for a long time. To say that it is a book about the art of living is both to describe and not to describe it. For it is in no sense a continuous thesis on a particular subject. Nor is it another of those novels for whose creative insights into so many of the varied problems of life and relationships Phyllis Bottome has become so justly famous. It is, in fact, a collection of essays, though that is to suggest perhaps too formal an atmosphere.

For it is above all else a friendly book. It is as if Miss Bottome has called us to an armchair at her side and with disarming simplicity and directness has shared with us some of the views and opinions she has formed in the course of a life which has been remarkable no less for its catholicity of experience than for its constancy of purpose. A glance at the title page affords ample evidence of this first aspect, for among the subjects on which she writes (and we select only a few) are Main Relation-

ships, Child Delinquency, Woman and Beauty, Private Worlds, Books and How to Write Them, and the Responsibilities of a Novelist.

The clue to the second aspect both of Miss Bottome's life, and indeed of this present volume, namely their constancy of purpose, is perhaps most clearly to be seen in her essay on some aspects of Adler's life and work. For Miss Bottome remains what she has always been, a profound admirer and faithful disciple of one whom she regards as "one of the greatest liberators of human personality that the world has ever known; and the best evidence for his own science." Her approach to the many and varied problems with which she deals in these pages is largely determined by Adler's basic hypothesis that although we may not be able to alter the facts it is within the power of those who wish to do so to alter their way of looking at the facts. Not all her readers will agree with her way of looking at this or that situation. But that after all is very largely what gives this book its value. For when Miss Bottome reaches the stage of administering sedatives rather than stimulants we may well begin to feel that there is something seriously wrong with her, or with ourselves—but certainly not in our stars!

The Faith of Judaism An Interpretation for our Times

By Isidore Epstein

(Soncino Press, 25s. Od.)

If ancient religions based on a claim of divine revelation are to survive they need to be reformulated from time to time in an idiom suited to the current age. It can never be true of the world's great classics, whether religious, like the Bible, or secular like the plays of Shakespeare (except in a very literal sense) that

"The Moving Finger writes; and
having writ
Moves on; nor all thy Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half
a line,
Nor all thy tears wash out a Word
of it."

For the written word, like the musical score, lives on in its own right and offers itself to successive generations for fresh exposition and re-interpretation in accordance with the needs, emphasis and outlook of the times; and there may well be a good deal of "cancellation," or at least modification in the process. In fact, of all great authors it may be said that they wrote better than they knew; a phenomenon which the Greeks explained by saying that they composed under the influence of the Muse.

Such a conception led to the Hebrew doctrine of the living Torah and it is Dr. Epstein's object in writing this book to re-interpret Torah-based Judaism in the light of modern thought and in the face of current scepticism. He has his eye on three particular groups within the Jewish community, the genuine unbelievers and opponents of all religion, those whose loyalty has been undermined by insidious propaganda, and the bewildered among the faithful who are liable to be swept away in the general rationalistic trend of the age.

But the author has done something more than address himself to his fellow-Jews. He has given a much needed modern exposition of orthodox Judaism for general consumption. Christians especially will be grateful that they now have available so comprehensive and readable an account of the parent religion, its origin and history, and all that it stands for in the modern world.

Indeed, Dr. Epstein is at his best when he is dealing with the need for religion as a whole and justifying a theistic, transcendent conception of the universe. He has shown that in the crisis of our time the need for religion is greater than ever both on social and personal grounds. He quotes with great effect Jung's statement—"Among all my patients over thirty-five years, there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life. It is safe to say that every one of them fell ill because he had lost that which the living religions of every age have given to their followers. And none of them has been really healed who did not regain his religious outlook." And he demonstrates that the belief in a single creative activity working through history towards an attainable goal, so far from being contrary to reason and the modern scientific outlook, offers a far more plausible account of the baffling mystery, which we call life, than any other of the existing theories.

It is a pity, therefore, that the book leaves something to be desired when it enters the arena of religious controversy and attempts to defend orthodox Judaism at the expense of other creeds and insights. Here the case is occasionally over-stated and logic seems to be sacrificed to partisanship. "The world is one great thought and God is thinking it," was a Platonic conception and seems to be sufficiently near the Hebraic to justify the claims of Greek philosophy even from the Jewish standpoint. Yet Dr. Epstein tends to disparage the loftiest Hellenic concepts, instead of regarding them as complementary to the Hebraic. Then again, he is not always fair to Paul and Christian teaching and a statement like "Christianity has no faith in human nature" may lead to serious misunderstanding. For the postulates which lie behind the mystical conception of the Torah and Israel as a divinely elected people are not in principle so far removed from Christian claims in regard to the Incarnation. It is a pity, too, that Dr. Epstein had no room to consider liberal religious interpretations of these events which are critical of all forms of orthodoxy whether Christian or Jewish.

Yet in spite of this one drawback, the book has performed a real and

lasting service for which its author deserves our wholehearted gratitude. He has succeeded in putting traditional Judaism on the map in a way which will appeal not only to its adherents but to all who are interested in man's eternal search for truth. His lucid, homely, yet cogent, style of writing is a fine vehicle for his opinions and makes his book a pleasure to read. His erudition and deep sincerity always insure that his views will be listened to with respect. Finally, the wide, comprehensive treatment of his subject which takes in so much of contemporary thought and philosophy will be especially attractive to the young intellectual and present him with a challenge, which he may resist, but can never ignore.

Men Seeking God

By Christopher Mayhew

(Allen and Unwin, 12s. 6d.)

Mr. Mayhew says he had some doubts about publishing this book, based on the series of Television programmes in which he interviewed representatives of five major world religions. He need have no regrets, for the book is a masterly presentation of men of different faiths — Moslem, Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish and Christian. His subjects, who are not necessarily the acknowledged leaders of their communities, but men who can fairly represent their faiths, discuss with Mr. Mayhew the essential features of their religion, and describe their daily practice of prayer and meditation. None of them is a recluse, and the value of the book is the greater because it shows clearly how the different faiths all find a practical expression in service of one's fellows. Each person also gives a selection of his favourite scripture passages, and here too is demonstrated the similarity in ethical teaching between all the great religions. Some excellent illustrations add vividness to the text.

Each section is inevitably too short to give anything like a detailed picture of the beliefs of the different religions. What does stand out from the pages, however, is the depth of religious experience that can come through Islam as well as through

Christianity, through Hinduism as well as Judaism, and even through Buddhism which does not acknowledge the existence of God.

Perhaps Mr. Mayhew is inclined to stress too much the similarity of his friends' religious experiences, when he attempts a summary in a closing chapter. Not everyone will accept his effort to reconcile the conflict between different faiths by suggesting that beliefs should not be taken on their literal meaning, but their validity judged by the religious experience to which they lead. An equally valid conclusion is that whilst we can recognise that God has revealed himself through many traditions, one faith may enshrine a unique revelation that is not contained in any of the others. One cannot, in the last resort, avoid the dilemma of irreconcilable beliefs as easily as Mr. Mayhew would wish. "Men Seeking God" is, for all that, a valuable book that will certainly help us to understand those hundreds of millions of men who were born into a different faith from ourselves.

JACQUES HEIM



**Craven 'A' for smooth,
clean smoking**